

VZCZCXRO2926
OO RUEHGR
DE RUEHWN #2180/01 3461609
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 121609Z DEC 06
FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3890
INFO RUCNCOM/EC CARICOM COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 1576
RUEHCV/USDAO CARACAS VE
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J2 MIAMI FL
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J5 MIAMI FL

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BRIDGETOWN 002180

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR WHA/CAR
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [ECON](#) [KCRM](#) [ST](#) [XL](#)

SUBJECT: OCTOGENARIAN SIR JOHN COMPTON RETURNED TO THE HELM IN ST.
LUCIA; UWP WINS 11 OF 17 SEATS IN UPSET

REF: BRIDGETOWN 1946

SLP Voted Out of Office

¶1. (U) The opposition United Workers Party (UWP) unexpectedly dominated the December 11 St. Lucia parliamentary elections with an 11-6 win. This electoral upset returns 80-year-old Sir John Compton to the Prime Minister's seat for his seventh term in the position (Compton previously served 1964-79, and 1982-96). Sir John had come out of retirement last year to lead the UWP in electoral preparations. (Note: Press accounts give various ages for Compton; post records show his DOB as May 1, 1926. End Note.)

¶2. (SBU) St. Lucians are already asking whether Compton will serve the full five years as Prime Minister. A common rumor is that he will serve for two years and then hand the reins over. However, Compton has emphasized to the press that his doctors approved his return to public office and that his mind is still very sharp.

¶3. (U) Two-term Prime Minister and head of the St. Lucian Labour Party (SLP) Kenny Anthony retained his seat in parliament by a thin margin but lost his bid for a third term. Outgoing PM Anthony conceded the election the evening of December 11, attributing the SLP's loss to the "mud and innuendo" thrown at his party. Former UN Ambassador and SLP leader Julian Hunte was defeated in the race to represent Gros Islet.

¶4. (U) Perhaps the most watched constituency was Castries Central, where attorney Richard Frederick had won a three-way by-election as an independent candidate in March. Running for re-election on the UWP slate, Frederick trounced Dr. Vaughan Lewis, who served as Prime Minister for the UWP for one year (1996-97) but crossed the aisle to the SLP for this election after a falling out with party leader Compton.

¶5. (U) Members of the new House of Assembly:

United Workers Party (UWP) Victors/District

Sir John Compton	Micoud North
Rufus Bousquet	Choiseul
Edmund Estephane	Dennerly South
Richard Frederick (Incumbent)	Castries Central
Arsene James (Incumbent)	Micoud South
Ezekial Joseph	Babonneau
Guy Joseph	Castries South East
Stephenson King	Castries North

Keith Mondesir	Anse La Raye/Canaries
Leonard "Spider" Montoute	Gros Islet
Marcus Nicholas (Incumbent)	Dennery North

St. Lucia Labour Party (SLP) Seats/District

Kenny Anthony (Incumbent)	Vieux Fort South
Alva Baptiste	Laborie
Harold Dalsen	Soufriere
Moses Jn Baptiste	Vieux Fort North
Robert Lewis	Castries South
Phillip Pierre (Incumbent)	Castries East

Apparently Smoothly-Run Elections

¶6. (U) Preliminary reports pointed to an orderly election process and high turnout. Small observer teams from the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) were present for the December 11 St. Lucia polls. In a joint press conference on December 12 both observer missions commended the St. Lucian authorities on the conduct of the elections and said they were "very pleased" with the courtesies extended to the observers. A few irregularities had occurred, but none so serious as to influence the results. No reports of election-related violence were aired.

Voting for Change

¶7. (SBU) Most observers recognized that one of the major themes of this election was the need for change, many likening the atmosphere surrounding the 2006 polls to that of 1997 when the St. Lucian Labor Party (SLP) took power (reftel). Few realized that coming change

BRIDGETOWN 00002180 002 OF 002

would be so clear-cut. Most analysts, observers, and St. Lucian citizens predicted a narrow SLP victory. Consultant Bill Johnson, a pollster for Jamaica's ruling People's National Party and the Gleaner newspaper, had predicted that Anthony's party would convincingly capture 14 seats. The Barbados-based Caribbean Development Research Services (CADRES) of political scientist Peter Wickham predicted a ruling party victory, but with a reduced majority. Prior to the election, one UWP supporter cited disaffection with the ruling party and the appeal to St. Lucian youth of political newcomer Richard Frederick as reasons to expect the vote for change that has now been registered.

¶8. (U) Post will provide further analysis when our two election observers return from St. Lucia.

GILROY